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536 4. Modern plays (hua-chü). The modern play, like the motion picture, has no regional character. Any acceptable play will be staged in all parts of China, and kuo-yü (the national language) is used rather than the various dialects. Ch'en Ch'i-t'ung's Thousands of Rivers and Mountains proves that the Communists' Long March in the thirties is always "correct" material for dramatization. The Song of the Red Flags, concerned with production drives in a textile factory in North China, was the joint creation of three playwrights, written after they had agreed on the ideological significance of this type of play and had sketched out the plot under the guidance of Chou Yang, the vice-minister of Cultural Affairs. The Song of the Red Flags was performed in Chungking as well as in other cities like Shanghai, Nanking, Peking, and Lan-chou. In Shanghai alone, it was given 159 performances, and some 125,000 people attended it.[22] If we take into account the fact that theater-going is now an organized activity of the various mass organizations such as the labor unions, the Women's Federation, the New Democratic Youth Corps, the Young Pioneers, and the study circles, the length of the run and the size of the audience do not accurately reflect the enthusiasm of the people but rather the effectiveness of the Communist organization of mass participation in the field of recreation.

546 5. Motion Pictures. Although Peking decides the policy, Shanghai and Mukden are now the centers of China's motion picture industry. The White-haired Girl, based on the same incident

22. Jen-min Hua-pao [People's Pictorial], Peking, July 1950.

546 as the opera of the same name, won first prize among the thirty-eight entries at the Communist International Motion-Picture Festival in Czechoslovakia in 1951. The Concentration Camp at Shanjao, produced in 1951, describes the life of the "patriotic people" in the Kuomintang concentration camp, and, according to the Communist reviewers, successfully demonstrates the "collective heroism" of the Communists under duress. When the rural production drive was about to begin in 1954, the movie Good Harvest was timed to be shown to the peasants during the festivities of the lunar New Year in order to emphasize the importance of increasing the output of the land. The People on the Grassland is a movie about the Mongols in Inner Mongolia. Sound tracks in the Mongol and Uigur languages have been made so that this picture may be circulated among the ethnic minorities. Similar movies about the ethnic minorities in the Southwest are likely to be made in the future.

III. ARTISTIC EXPRESSION

A. Painting and the Plastic Arts

532 Painting and the plastic arts are largely utilitarian in China today. The utilitarian spirit puts them either in the realm of propaganda or craftsmanship. As propaganda, they become extremely derivative and stereotyped; as craftsmanship, they utilize local characteristics and traditional skills, although they sometimes appear to be unrestrainedly florid and pretentious. Chinese brush paintings, woodcuts, oil paintings, cartoons

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533 numbers arranged to depict a political theme are frequently presented at the cultural centers and by propaganda teams traveling in the countryside. (For more discussion on song and dance, see chapter on Artistic and Literary Expression).

B. Motion Pictures

1. Control

546 So far there has been no indication that any motion picture has been or is being made in Southwest China, except perhaps some newsreels photographed by movie teams attached to the "Liberation Army." Thus the problem of control in this region is reduced simply to that of supervising the distribution and showing of films. More remote from sources of American and other Western motion picture supply, even the question of censorship will automatically be taken care of as soon as distribution is centralized. Early in 1950, the Southwest China branch of the China Motion Picture Distribution Company was in operation. It monopolizes distribution and is directly controlled by its headquarters in Peking.

Responsible for the supervision of the showing of motion pictures in this region are the provincial cultural and education commissions. They are also in charge of organization and the assignment of mobile motion picture teams to tour the countryside.

2. Development

In July 1950, the Southwest China branch

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546 of the China Motion Picture Distribution Company reported that it had already handled 53 Russian films and 41 Chinese films since the beginning of that year. At that time, motion picture theater-goers in the Southwest Region still favored Chinese films. The Russian films only drew a total of 446,000 people while Chinese pictures drew 837,000 for their total. In January 1953, the distribution system was further consolidated and most of the theaters in larger cities were showing the same films either simultaneously or by rotation. The quota for each was determined and announced in advance. The following is a sample of the types of films that the people in Chungking saw in motion picture theaters in 1953:

Table 12. Motion Pictures Shown in Chungking Theaters (Jan-Feb 1953) */

Type of Film	Number
Russian	12
Newsreels	4
Historical	1
People's Liberation Army documentary	1
Reconstruction of China	2
Revolutionary stories	4
Cartoon	1
Total	25

*/ Compiled from advertisements in New China Daily, Chungking, January and February 1953 issues.

546 The Russian films dealt mostly with the October Revolution and key personalities of the Soviet revolutionary war. The newsreels included one entitled "We Are Opposed to Germ Warfare," and "Long Live Peace," which depicts the Communist-inspired Peace Conference of Asian and Pacific Nations held in Peking in the fall of 1952. The historical film dealt with the pacifism of Mo Tzu (Mo Ti), an ancient Chinese philosopher. The economic achivement in Northeast China and Inner Mongolia was the subject matter of the films on reconstruction. Films dealing with revolutionary stories depicted the suppression of anti-Communist secret society, I-kuan Tao, and the change in pastoral life in Northwest China. One of these films, under the title "The Flame of Wrath," was actually filmed in Northeast China.

Admission to a motion picture theater in the city was JMP$2,000, or about the price of two and a half pounds of rice. Motion picture theaters in the rural areas charged only JMP $1,500 for admission. These rates were fixed by the government.

As to the newsreels shown in rural areas, the Communist motion picture producing industry has turned out an ample supply of them. Government authorities pay specific attention to the motion picture teams visiting the factories and mining areas. Regarding this, the central Cultural Administration at Peking on June 8, 1954 issued a special directive ordering local governments to "supervise motion picture distribution agencies by adequately supplying these mobile

546 teams with films."[59] By May 1952, the thirty-nine teams operated by the cultural and educational organizations in this region had given shows to 17,329,537 people. According to Communist official announcements, these figures did not include the teams attached to the Army or organized by labor unions. It has also been reported that in the cities of Southwest China, 8,799,704 people saw motion pictures in 1950, and 20,522,438 in 1951. If these statistics are reliable, then the Communist goal of enabling every inhabitant in Southwest China to see at least one motion picture show a year would be within the range of achievement.[60] (The population of Southwest China in 1950-1951 was about 75,000,000.)

Promotion of Russian films has been made an official task for the distributors in this region as a result of the relative scarcity of native films. The literary purges that have been going on in North and East China are exerting a restrictive influence on script writers. Consequently, the film production industry has not been able to make enough movies, and producers have to resort to writing titles and dialogue in Chinese for foreign films already approved by the government. Over 50 films made in countries in the Soviet orbit, with titles and dialogue written in Chinese, were distributed throughout Mainland China in 1952.[61]

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59. Jen-min Shou-ts'e, [People's Handbook], Tientsin, Ta-kung pao, 1955, p. 540.

60. New China Daily, Chungking, May 21, 1952, p. 3.

61. Ibid., January 16, 1953, p. 3.

546 In 1954, the Shanghai Motion Picture Producing Company, in collaboration with the Northeast Motion Picture Producing Company, wrote the titles and dialogue in Chinese for 40 foreign films, including a few non-Communist ones such as "The Bicycle Thief," made in Italy, and some "progressive" pictures from Japan.[62] Meanwhile a Japanese journalist reported upon his return to his country from a visit to Red China in 1953 that the average motion picture theater in large Chinese cities had to have about eight films a month, that the government could only supply one or two, and that the rest came from the Soviet Union.[63] In October 1953, a "Russian Motion Picture Week" was observed in Southwest China commemorating the 36th anniversary of the October Revolution. During that week in Chengtu, Chungking and Kunming, over 1,413,000 people saw a Russian motion picture.[64]

All this points up an acute shortage of native films in Southwest China.

C. Lantern Slides and Phonograph Records

Despite physical limitations, officials in

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62. Enlightenment Daily, Peking, April 6, 1954, p. 2.

63. Chao Ts'ung, "I-nien-lai Chung-kung Ti Wen-hua Kung-tso" ["The Chinese Communist Cultural Work during the Past Year"] , Tsu-kuo Chou-k'an [China Weekly] , Hong Kong, January 4, 1954, p. 36.

64. China Weekly, No. 62, March 8, 1954, p. 22.

546 Southwest China in charge of mass communication and propaganda have been stressing the importance of using audio-visual aids. The program to develop lantern slides for public information is tied in with the expansion of libraries and cultural centers which have already been mentioned.

Chairman Ch'u T'u-nan of the Cultural and Educational Commission for Southwest China was proud to point out in September 1953 that a total of 845 projectors (for slides) had been acquired, averaging two to each hsien in this region. The slides stocked at the cultural centers and libraries were divided into the following categories:

Table 13. Lantern Slides in Southwest China (1952) */

Category	Percentage
Political	50.8
Agricultural	23.7
Industrial	7.0
Health and Sanitation	10.0
Popular Science	3.7
Others	4.8

*/ New China Daily, Chungking, September 30, 1952, p. 3.

Table 13 shows that in providing the public with lantern slides, the first and foremost emphasis is on political indoctrination. Agricultural and

546 public health subjects come next, because Southwest China is predominantly agrarian and the people's knowledge of sanitation is particularly lacking. Besides organizing shows at the cultural centers or libraries, mobile motion picture teams and propaganda groups also make use of slides and projectors. When Chairman Ch'u claimed that the cultural centers in the region had given over 9,000,000 people political education and enrolled 1,700,000 illiterates in reading classes,[65] he undoubtedly included those who had been show motion pictures and lantern slides as well.

Slides were extensively used in connection with educational campaigns on health and sanitation conducted in the Tibetan Nationality Minority area in northwestern Szechwan Province early in 1953.[66] It was found that where the Chinese language was not spoken, drawings and photographs were satisfactory media of communication.

It is not known whether facilities exist in Southwest China for the manufacture of lantern

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65. New China Daily, Chungking, September 30, 1952, p. 3.

66. New China Daily, Chungking, January 24, 1953, p. 3.

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slides on a large scale, but in 1953 such equipment was advertised for sale in the New China Daily of Chungking. Slides on maternity hygiene, public health, educational subjects, and current events were available in the market at that time. A set of 36 slides was sold for JMP$130,000 (about US$26, official rate) which was equivalent to the price of 200 pounds of rice.[67] 546

Phonograph records are used at the cultural centers and recreational clubs, but not as extensively as lantern slides and radio sets. They were also available in Chungking in 1953 for JMP$16,000 (about US$3.20) each, or about the price of 23 pounds of rice.

V. MASS ORGANIZATIONS AS MEDIA OF PUBLIC INFORMATION AND PROPAGANDA

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The Communists are fond of using the word "network" for activities pertaining to public information and propaganda. Already discussed in this study are the news-gathering network, radio network, library and book distribution network, and motion picture showing and cultural center network. Included in the Communist term of "cultural network", however, are many mass organizations contributing to the dissemination of public information, education, and propaganda.[68]

One of these organizations is the Sino-Russian Friendship Association. Established on October 5, 1949, in Peking, it expanded rapidly and by February 1952 had 64,200 large and small branches

[next page for 67. and 68.]